

Remarks/Arguments:

Independent claims 37 and 76 have been amended to include the feature of:

... the inside layer and the surface layers are made of materials identical to each other.

This feature is supported by the second paragraph of embodiment 3 of Applicants' originally filed application:

... aramid fiber non-woven fabric 6 used in the third embodiment has a density ranging from 700 to 1000 kg/m³ around a surface layer of both the faces of fabric 6 as shown in Fig. 2A. The density of the inside of fabric 6 is lower than that around the surface layer, and preferably ranges from 500 to 700 kg/m³.

The inner layer and the surface layers of the aramid nonwoven fabric are thus made of materials identical to each other.

The combination of Gause Example 1 and Gause Example 4 does not suggest Applicants' claimed feature (see claims 37 and 76) of:

... the density of the non-woven fabric in the inside layer is lower than the density of non-woven fabric in each of the surface layers.

Example 4 of Gause (col. 10, lines 11 to 17) describes that "This could be minimized by using a less dense and more open paper to get better wetting during the single treatment with epoxy resin." Example 4 does not suggest that the paper of Example 4 is less dense than the surface layers (glass fabric) of Example 1. Rather, one of ordinary skill in the art would understand that the paper of Example 4 is less dense than the paper of Example 1. One of ordinary skill in the art would not understand this description to disclose the relation between the density of the paper of Example 4 and the glass fabric surface layers of Example 1.

By providing the above feature, Applicants provide an advantage, namely, that "Instead, much more resin component is attached around respective surface layers of both the faces of non-woven fabric 6. As a result, smooth resin layer 8 mainly made

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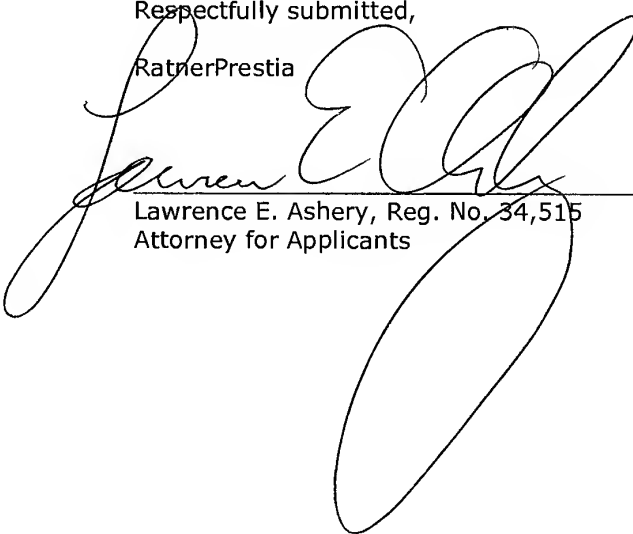
of impregnated resin 7 is formed on pre-preg sheet 1" (Embodiment 3). The advantage obtained by Applicants is not obtained by any of the references of record.

The Official Action argues that there is motivation to replace the high density paper of Example 1 of Gause by the "less dense and more open paper" (Gause, col. 10, lines 15 to 16). In particular, the Official Action argues that Example 4 of Gause discloses the advantage of, "better wetting ... with epoxy resin." One of ordinary skill in the art would understand that Example 4 of Gause teaches that the "less dense and more open paper" provides the advantage. Applicants have amended the claims to recite that the three layers are made of materials identical to each other. By contrast, Example 4 of Gause teaches that the surface layers are made of glass fabric, and the inner layer is made of paper. Thus, Gause is different than the amended independent claims. Further, nowhere else in Gause is there a teaching of the inner layer and the surface layers being made of materials (e.g., paper or glass fabric) identical to each other.

In view of the amendments and arguments set forth above, the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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